



Date: March 2, 2004

In reply refer to: Advisory-0304

Subject: Gifts From Outside Sources

To: All OCFO Employees

Recently, a number of personnel have received full versions of Microsoft Office Professional Edition 2003 and Microsoft Office OneNote 2003 through the mail from Microsoft Corporation. These gifts were preceded in the mail by a card announcing that the software would be arriving "in the coming weeks." The card noted that the software products were being sent "without obligation."

These items have been determined to be gifts from a prohibited source, and may not be accepted by Office of the Chief Financial Officer employees. A prohibited source includes any person, company, or organization that:

- Has business with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) or any of its agencies;
- Seeks to do business with USDA or any of its agencies;
- Conducts operations regulated by USDA or any of its agencies;
- Has interests that may be affected by your performance or nonperformance of official duties; or
- Is a professional, technical, trade association, or other organization, a majority of whose members are prohibited sources.

If you receive such items, please return them to Microsoft. This marketing technique, for training, computer items/software, etc., is common in the private sector; however, it creates problems when used to market products to the Government. For more information, please review the website at [5 CFR 2635.202](#).

If you have questions or encounter situations not covered by this advisory, please contact your supervisor. Supervisors with inquiries should contact the Agency Ethics Office at 504-426-0308 or 504-426-0307.

LINDA J. SIMMONS
Agency Ethics Advisor